

Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: A Critical Constructivist Analysis

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Abstract

Referring to the argument that a state's historic background and geographic location in the world are inherent elements of its foreign policy narrative which constitutes its identity, this article examined and brought narratives on the reconstruction of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East which was directed by a foreign policy doctrine of Davutoğlu as defined Davutoğlu Doctrine. Using a critical constructivist perspective, it contends that Davutoğlu's foreign policy vision for Turkey is an attempt to reconstruct the international role and responsibilities of Turkey through a transformed identity based on a reinterpretation of its historical heritage and geographic location. This article concluded that the Davutoğlu Doctrine's vision was not only an endeavor to overturn the traditional tendencies in Turkish foreign policy, but also in any ways, is a task of identity transformation. Further, this new activism has led to a shift in the axis of its foreign policy from the Western orientation to a more assertive, strict independent foreign policy that is central to the Davutoğlu Doctrine. Finally, Davutoğlu Doctrine can be recognized that it has reconstructed Turkey's state identity to reshape Turkish foreign policy onwards to the Middle East aiming to reposition Turkey as the global representative and a key player in the region.

Keywords:

*Davutoğlu Doctrine; Turkey's State Identity; Turkish Foreign Policy;
Critical Constructivism, the Middle East.*

Introduction

After the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AK Party) came to power in 2002, Turkish Foreign Policy had undergone a significant transformation. The key actor behind this transformation was Ahmet Davutoğlu.¹ He is better known as the chief architect of the Turkish Foreign Policy since his appointment from the post of chief advisor to the Prime Minister from 2002 to 2009, then as the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2014, lastly as the Prime Minister from 2014 to 2016. Davutoğlu's vision of Turkey in the international politics has been widely discussed on

¹Murat Yeşiltaş, "Turkey's Quest for a 'New International Order': The Discourse of Civilization and the Politics of Restoration", *Perceptions*, Vol. XIX Issue 4 (2014), pp. 43-76.

various literatures on Turkish Foreign Policy, such as Yeşiltaş (2014) tells about the discursive transformation of the geopolitical vision in Turkish Foreign Policy² and then Aras (2014) tells about how the Davutoğlu Era shaped and ruled Turkish Foreign Policy³. Especially after he was appointed as the Foreign Minister in 2009, discussions, such as articulated by Yeşiltaş, had ranged between whether Davutoğlu's vision pointed to a rupture in the traditional role and identity which modelled for Turkey as a bridge between continents with an inherently Western character, whose foundations were laid largely by the Turkish Revolution and the newly created Turkish Republic. It had been argued by Yeşiltaş, that what the AK Party heralded, under the intellectual leadership of Davutoğlu, was a symbolic return to the past, through stylized references to the glory days of the Ottoman Empire, during which 'the Türks' had played a central role in their region and beyond. This article examines and brings the description of "Davutoğlu Doctrine" and see how the doctrine shaped the Turkey's state identity and directed Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. Within this study, the author uses the constructivist theoretical framework to approach the concept on identity.

Particularly, discussion on Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East nowadays has increased significantly as a subject of interest in academic circles and policy makers. Turkey has become increasingly active and assertive in its policies in the Middle East. At the same time, Turkey has claimed to develop a comprehensive foreign policy strategy towards the region. Within this context, Turkey began to emphasize in the improvement of its relations with the neighboring countries, demonstrated an eagerness to play the role of a mediator, promoted its soft power, and engaged in increasing economic relations with the countries in the region.⁴

The main focus of this study is the overall identity constructions that brings the identity narrative and explore the responsibilities, hierarchies and foreign policy actions. For this aim, the study examines the foreign policy narrative of the key authoritative speaker and intellectual architect of Turkish foreign policy, Ahmet Davutoğlu. The study does not claim to provide an exhaustive analysis of Turkish foreign policy and

²Murat Yeşiltaş, pp. 43-76

³Bülent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16 Issue 4 (2014), pp. 404-418.

⁴Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", *SAM (Centre for Strategic Research)*, Vol. 3 (2012), pp. 1-14.

identity reconstruction process under the AK Party; rather it aims to shed light on the building blocks of this process through a study of Davutoğlu's writings and interviews. Thus, the study provides a critical constructivist explanation to understand Davutoğlu's foreign policy vision in the Middle East.

Critical Constructivism and Identity-Turkish Foreign Policy Nexus

Researching on identity and foreign policy inevitably will find link to constructivism. The frame of constructivist, International Relations (IR) has many twists and turns, but the main thread is the mainstreaming of the claim that reality and knowledge are constructed socially and politically, contingently, and at various levels that can be debated. Apparently, the core of constructivist begin when the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The red-faced of the inability to predict the dramatic event, the mainstream scholar turned his attention to the alternatives offered by dissidents since at least the 1980s.⁵ One alternative is constructivism, a theoretical system with an almost strengthening potential, as the starting sociologist of the field described at the time.⁶

In foreign policy analysis, the main channel of constructivist influence is identity and, in particular, the identity of the state. In the early 2000s, an emerging trading zone developed; identity, one of the main theoretical works of constructivist accounts of global politics, became foreign policy.⁷

The fundamental difference between conventional and critical constructivism is, as said by Cho (2009), that while conventional constructivism focuses on the subject of intersubjective ontology, critical constructivism distinguishes itself through its focus on the construction of discursive social realities. Thus, the difference between conventional and critical constructivism lies not in their assumptions about the existence of an objective world but its emphasis on language as an intermediary is symbolized; exist but its meaning is shaped through discourse. Therefore, meaning is not an individual or collective, but a social phenomenon. It should be noted that everyone has different ideas in

⁵Emanuel Adler, *Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, and Debates*, in *Handbook of International Relations* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2013), pp. 112-144.

⁶Marlene Wind, *Nicholas G. Onuf: the Rules of Anarchy*, in John Vincent et.al., *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making?* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 254-288.

⁷Ted Hopf, *Constructivism All the Way Down* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 369-378.

each head, but that meanings inheriting in practice and the category in which people are related to each other and the environment.⁸

By the elaboration of the reading of Wendt (1999), Adler (2013), and Zehfuss (2001) can be concluded that the key concepts of critical constructivism in IR are shaped discursively through the representation of states and linguistic elements. To explore how this concept is formed, critical constructivists engage in detailed text research to understand the system of meaning and representation. Besides, critical constructivist critics are more pluralistic than their conventional counterparts in terms of methodology, which includes the use of post-positivist methods such as discourse analysis.⁹

Regarding identity, Cho (2009) adds that critical constructivism takes into account how people recognize a particular identity and related narrative, and focuses on the role played by the differences, the practices and other representations of this discourse.¹⁰ Also, by the reading of Onuf (2016), critical constructivist explores how agents use this identity to justify certain foreign policies rather than identify the impact of this identity as conventional constructivist use. Thus, critical constructivism aims to blow the myths associated with identity formation, while the conventional constructivist focuses on the treatment of that identity as a possible action.¹¹

By establishing this foundation, it is said in this study that there is a close relationship between foreign policy and Turkey's state identity representation. This connection is sealed by the overall need for security and concerns with Turkey's general direction.

Turkey's state identity and foreign policy are supposed ontologically associated through discursive performances of foreign policy in which the identity arises, which in its place is built as legitimacy for the proposed policy. Foreign policy issues that Turkey proposes in international politics are political acts, not facts. They are social construc-

⁸Young Chul Cho, "Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security: An Analytical Survey", *The Korean Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 49 Issue 3 (2009), pp. 75-102.

⁹See Alexander E. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Emanuel Adler, *Loc.Cit.*, and Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 7 Issue 3 (2001), pp. 315-348.

¹⁰Young Chul Cho, "Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security: An Analytical Survey", *The Korean Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 49 Issue 3 (2009), pp. 75-102.

¹¹Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, "Constructivism at the Crossroads; or, the Problem of Moderate-Sized Dry Goods", *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 10 Issue 2 (2016), pp. 115-132.

tions advanced by the state officials in the process of producing and reproducing the identity of the state.¹²

In the context of foreign policy discourse of political elites, two dimensions of narrative about identity play a key role in shaping their vision and responsibilities corresponding to the state. It is said space, time, and responsibility are the great concepts through which the political community is; limitations, internal constitutions, and relationships with the outside world are important and debatable. The temporal aspect of identity; how identity is represented in its experience with the past, present, and future collectivities around the theme of progress, its impact on the vision of its foreign government because the political subject is always formed in time. Linked with this, it can be argued that the way history and the legacy of Turkey are interpreted and portrayed in the Davutoğlu's discourses not only form the way in which the Turkish political elite perceives the state's position and responsibility to its neighbors but also affects Turkey's wider foreign policy objectives with the wider international politics.¹³

Moreover, the spatial aspect of identity focuses on the bonds that bind itself to space and certain geography, and involves drawing space for existence through the construction of boundaries. In most cases, the geographical location of actors is seen as providing opportunities and/or even barriers in foreign policy. Articulation of the dimensions of identity is important to determine the playing field limit for actors, who, in the case of Turkey, define the actors and frontiers of the surrounding neighborhood and beyond. Such discursive practice also finds Turkey in the world and builds relations between Turkey and others in the form of neighbors, partners, allies, rivals and challengers.¹⁴

Narratives on identity and Turkish foreign policy choices, by Bozdağlıoğlu (2008), are articulated through the discursive practices of a number of authoritative discursive agents whose positions are defined in the political process that grants privileges to some and marginalizes others. This process, which functions based on the existing

¹²Behlül Özkan, "Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 56 Issue 4 (2014), pp. 119-140.

¹³Esen Kirdiş, "The Role of Foreign Policy in Constructing the Party Identity of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP)", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 16 Issue 2 (2015), pp. 178-194.

¹⁴Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakyapolat, "Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61 Issue 4 (2007), pp. 471-488.

discursive structure, determines which sounds are worth listening to and assessed on a particular issue. While it is true that a large number of discursive agents contribute to dominant and marginalized debates and discourses, some decision-makers usually have a stronger voice based on their institutional power.¹⁵

Davutoğlu Doctrine: the Overview of Strategic Depth

Grand Strategy is a concept that is designed to connect all sources of state power to achieve political goals.¹⁶ In this case, the draft grand strategy for Turkey is strongly influenced by aspects of geography and history. Geographically, Turkey is at the crossroads of three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa stretching from the Anatolian peninsula of Southwest Asia to the Balkans of southeastern Europe. The Asian and European regions are separated by the Marmara Sea that is part of the Turkish region. Turkey is flanked by the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. In addition, the Turkish region is complemented by the marine richness of Marmara with an excellent maritime climate that contributes to the trade routes and marine fleet base. This unique Turkish geographical position has implications for Turkey's geopolitical policy which is often used for expansion during the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey until the end of the Cold War in 1991, a grand strategy embraced by Turkey is Kemalism or Kemalist reforms introduced by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Kemalist substantially reform has taken root and change the political, cultural, and economic systems based on the previous Turkish Islamic values in the reign of the Ottoman, Türks changed to Western values or also called Europeanization.¹⁸

During the Cold War, pro-Western identity which was introduced by Atatürk regained one with the involvement of Turkey in the Marshall Plan project was initiated by the United States. This project provides an opportunity to the integration of Turkey and

¹⁵Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Modernity, Identity and Turkey's Foreign Policy", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10 Issue 1 (2008), pp. 55-76.

¹⁶Joshua Alvarez, *The Grand Strategy of the Republic of Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2012).

¹⁷Hüseyin Bağcı and Aslahan Doğanlar, "Changing Geopolitics and Turkish Foreign Policy", *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, Vol. XVI Issue 2 (2009), pp. 97-115.

¹⁸Utkan Kocatürk, "Atatürk's Revolutions and Modernization", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol. V Issue 13 (1988), pp. 107-125.

Europe, where Turkey contributed to the Committee for European Economic Cooperation (CEEC), the European Recovery Program (ERP), the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC).¹⁹ In addition to the Marshall Plan involved in the project, Turkey was joined by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is allied defense pact in 1952.²⁰ The participation of Turkey in NATO started to show the openness of relations between Turkey and the European Union in the field of security, in which Turkey contributes in the fight against the expansion of the Soviet Union into the European and Mediterranean regions.²¹

Europeanization, which rose during the Cold War was also led Turkey to the desire to join the European Economic Community (EEC). Turkey finally submitted its membership proposal officially on April 14, 1987.²² The European Commission then responded to Turkey's request in 1989 with suspension of membership discussions. The suspension was later discussed again in the 1990s when a single market in the European Union was in operation. In 1995, the negotiations ultimately resulted in the entry of Turkey into the EU customs union in 1995, exactly three years after the operation of the European Union single market.²³

The entry of Turkey into the European Union customs union to make this country closer to the European Union, especially in terms of economy and trade. But at the same time, Turkish Kemalism eroded grand strategy. This is due to internal and external factors. From internal factors, Turkey experienced a government crisis. The Turkish government, which at the time was dominated by military forces, had failed to win the support of civil society. As for external factors, Turkey faced a system change since the collapse of the Soviet Union, where Turkey's strongest allies the Europe and the United States changed Turkish foreign policy focus from security to global economic cooperation. This change brings the cultural shock of the concept of grand strategy Kemalism is

¹⁹Saban Çalış, "Turkey's Integration with Europe: Initial Phase Reconsidered", *SAM (Centre for Strategic Research)*, June-August (2000), pp. 1-13.

²⁰Gülnur Aybet, "The Evolution of NATO's Three Phases and Turkey's Transatlantic Relationship". *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. XVII Issue 1 (2012), pp. 19-36.

²¹Hüseyin Bağcı and Aslahan Anlar Doğanlar, "Changing Geopolitics and Turkish Foreign Policy", *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska*, Vol. XVI Issue 2 (2009) pp. 97-115.

²²Saban Çalış, "Turkey's Integration with Europe: Initial Phase Reconsidered", *SAM (Centre for Strategic Research)*, June-August (2000), pp. 1-13.

²³Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the European Union: The Domestic Politics of Negotiating Pre-Accession", *Macalester International*, Vol. 15 Article 10 (2005), pp. 44-80.

still focused on security. So that in the 1990s, Turkish foreign policy has faced the global challenge which requires Turkey to make a reconsideration of grand strategy orientation.²⁴

Since the victory of the AK Party in the elections of 2002, there has been a change in the orientation of the Turkish grand strategy. The change occurred after the emergence of a doctrine known as the “strategic depth”. The doctrine was a manifestation of the idea of Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2001. He was better known as the chief architect of the Turkish Foreign Policy since his appointment to the post of chief advisor to the Prime Minister from 2002 to 2009, then as the Minister of Foreign Affairs From 2009 to 2014, lastly as the Prime Minister from 2014 to 2016.²⁵

Davutoğlu argued that by having strategic depth, Turkey can apply a multidimensional policy and claim a central role in global politics. Moreover, this doctrine also insists on a change of Turkish foreign policy into a militaristic emphasis on soft power to promote the strength of the economic policy, democratization, and conflict resolution. This is further reinforced by the argument of Davutoğlu that,

*“Turkey enjoys multiple regional identities and thus has the responsibility to follow an integrated and multidimensional foreign policy. The unique combination of our history and geography brings with it a sense of responsibility to actively contribute towards conflict resolution and international peace and security in All These areas is a call of duty arising from the depths of a multidimensional history for Turkey.”*²⁶

Davutoğlu’s statement explained that the doctrine of strategic depth was influenced by factors of history and geography. As the reading of Yeşiltaş (2013), in this case, Davutoğlu voiced again the new Ottomans by extending Turkish foreign policy influence beyond the limits of Ottoman rule and reintroducing Islamic values. Therefore, Turkish foreign policy this time is not only oriented on one side of the West, but also has expanded to the Balkans, Caucasus, Asia, and the Middle East.²⁷

²⁴Joshua Alvarez, *The Grand Strategy of the Republic of Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2012).

²⁵Murat Yeşiltaş, “The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

²⁶Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

²⁷Murat Yeşiltaş, “The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

Davutoğlu has stressed the idea that since Turkey should take on the role as a key country, its new position should be one that provides security and stability not only for itself, but also for its neighboring regions. He links Turkey's own security and stability to the opportunity of taking on a more active, constructive role in order to provide order, stability and security in its environs. In his article *Turkish foreign policy Vision*, Davutoğlu outlines five principles of Turkish foreign policy making process. They are;

- (1) balance between security and democracy,
- (2) a 'zero problem policy with Turkey's neighbors',
- (3) developing relations with neighboring regions and beyond,
- (4) adherence to a multi-dimensional foreign policy,
- (5) and, rhythmic diplomacy.²⁸

In regards to the Middle East, Davutoğlu (2008) mentions four main principles on which Turkey needs to rely on in order to further establish its position in this region; (1) security for everyone, which means security for the entire region, (2) priority must be given to dialogue as means of solving crises, (3) economic interdependence, and (4) cultural coexistence and plurality.²⁹ As Aras (2014) said, naturally, Davutoğlu's foreign policy doctrine has received much criticism. The main criticism is the neo-Ottomanist dimension of his vision, which places Turkish foreign policy activity mostly in former Ottoman territories. Aras argues that by making boundaries, de facto, meaningless while respecting national sovereignty, Davutoğlu has created a geopolitical disposition that exhibits a tendency of returning to the former Ottoman Empire's backyard.³⁰

In general, the Davutoğlu Doctrine has brought changes to Turkish foreign policy. The change can be seen from the transformation of Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War that acted as a Western ally in the fight against the expansion of the Soviet Union has now changed to become more dynamic. The dynamic changes can be seen from Turkey's efforts to establish good relations and closeness with neighboring countries. Nevertheless, the ideas about the strategic depth, Davutoğlu stated that,

²⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10 Issue 1, pp. 77-96.

²⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar* (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

³⁰ Bülent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 16(4), 404-418.

“We do not leave our destiny in the hands of others... The critical term here is inclusiveness; we have to be inclusive because we are all Caucasus, we are the Balkans, we are the Middle East, and we are Europe.”³¹

The Davutoğlu’s statement makes it clear that Turkish foreign policy is inclusive, so, it is part of another region. Nonetheless, Davutoğlu still states that Turkey is Europe. This can be interpreted as Turkey’s wishes are still not faded to want full membership status in the European Union. Turkey is still seeking its access process.

According to the elaboration writings of Yeşiltaş (2013), Aras (2014), and Murinson (2006), the author sees that Davutoğlu Doctrine through his Strategic Depth has policy implications for Turkish foreign policy, those are,

- (1) Refocusing Turkey’s historic alliances
 - (a) Traditional allies like the United States and Europe are important, but new emphasis needs to be paid to former estranged neighbors such as Russia and Iran.
 - (b) New alliances with emerging powers like the Chinese and India help to ‘balance’ Turkey’s dependency on the West.
- (2) Greater identification with Turkey’s former Ottoman space
 - (a) Renewed interest in engaging Muslim former colonies that might welcome Turkey’s return to the Middle East with particular focus on Syria and Iraq.
 - (b) Taking on greater responsibility for regional stability in the Balkans through working with new allies such as Serbia and Russia in addition to its NATO obligations.
 - (c) Resolving of historic differences with Armenia to enhance greater cooperation throughout the Caucus given Turkey’s central role.
- (3) Reaching Beyond the Ottomans
 - (a) Emphasizing Turkey’s role in the Muslim world and historic relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan while building stronger connections with places as far away as Malaysia (Davutoğlu has a personal affinity given his tenure as a visiting professor here) and Indonesia.
 - (b) Engaging Central Asia and offering an economic model of development through Turkish businesses, construction, education, and NGOs.³²

³¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

Redefining Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East

Studies of Turkish foreign policy arose significantly after the end of the Cold War. The starting of Turkey to the world economy and changing politics through the Özal administration was a significant factor adding to this new influx of scholarship. Changes within the international politics and a rising issue on potential foreign alignments also impacted this pattern.³³ According to Fuller (2008), amid 1990s, the debates about Turkish foreign policy of Turkey concentrated mainly on its relationships with Israel. The Turkish government preferred to boost its relationships with the state of Israel sometimes at the expense of its relationships with the other countries in the region. This situation proceed until the 2000s and major changes in regional politics as well as Turkey's relationships with the Middle Eastern region.³⁴

The Davutoğlu Doctrine has been one of the very most frequently cited and debated topics of Turkish foreign policy in recent years. Davutoğlu's publication concerns on Turkey's repositioning in the international politics in the post-Cold War period.³⁵ Davutoğlu expresses his goals as providing an analysis of Turkish strategic depth that considers its historical background as well as the geocultural, geopolitical and geoeconomic dimensions of Turkish foreign policy.³⁶ For him, the shift to a dynamic international politics after a comparatively static bipolar system through the Cold War creates a significant challenge for examining Turkish foreign policy.³⁷

Regarding to Davutoğlu (2001), Turkey stands at an important turning point in history, as such, Turkey needs to integrate the depth of its own history and geography

³²See Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Loc.Cit*, Bülent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited", *Loc.Cit*, and Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42 Issue 6 (2006), pp. 945-964.

³³Ali Aslan, "The Foreign Policy-Hegemony Nexus: Turkey's Search for a 'New' Subjectivity in World Politics and Its Implications for US-Turkish Relations", *Perceptions*, Vol. XVII Issue 4 (2012), pp. 159-184.

³⁴Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Pres, 2008).

³⁵Ali Balcı, *Türkiye Dış Politikası İlkeler, Aktörler, Uygulamalar* (Istanbul: Etkileşim Yayınları, 2013).

³⁶Şaban Kardeş, "Turkey under the Justice and Development Party: Between Transformation of 'Islamism' and Democratic Consolidation?", *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 17 Issue 2 (2008), pp. 175-187.

³⁷Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Zero Problems in a New Era*, (<http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/21/zero-problems-in-a-new-era/>, accessed on August 18, 2016).

through a rational strategic vision, which will provide a pro-active actions. Analyzing the domestic aspect alongside the dynamic dimensions of the international politics specifically will pave the way for the emergence of alternative perspectives that may fill up the voids in Turkey's strategic vision. Suggesting alternative perspectives for Turkish foreign policy is incredibly innovative in an interval where the European union was considered the only dimension of Turkish foreign policy, and Turkish foreign policy makers experienced segregated consequently of self-isolation from the Middle East and exclusion from the European Union.³⁸

In his idea, Davutoğlu concerns on the lack of a strategic dimension in Turkish foreign policy. According to him, extreme pessimism and exaggerated optimism regarding the Turkey's future role in the international politics is accountable for the partly lack of a strategic vision. This was relatively a result of the unstable political environment in Turkey in the 1990s. Instability in different coalition governments' approach to foreign policy was challenged by the risk averse and pro-status quo Turkish foreign policy bureaucracy, which in turn created contradictory messages in foreign policy.³⁹

According to Davutoğlu (2001), there are numerous known reasons for Turkey's failure in designing strategic theory. First, the institutional framework of Turkish foreign policy making does not allow foreign policy makers to build up alternative strategic view. Second, Davutoğlu claimed that historical background also creates an important impediment to more active foreign policy making.⁴⁰

The final contribution to Turkey's insufficient strategic vision has to do with problems about historical consciousness as well as a concern of split identity. According to Davutoğlu (2013), failing to identify historical continuities leads to the polarization of the society and a clash of identities domestically. This also engenders significant contradictions between domestic and external identities. Turkey, to become more effective, needs to design a harmony between two identities. Davutoğlu argues, it might be extremely problematic for a country that does not have historical memory space and consciousness to leave its mark on background. The factor that distinguishes between coun-

³⁸Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

³⁹Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁴⁰Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

tries, shapes the stream of history and it is designed by external developments is just how that these countries approach their own histories.⁴¹

Davutoğlu (2001) claims, that Turkey began to feel the lack of a strategic vision more seriously following the aftermath of the Cold War. The changes in power configurations during this time period compelled Turkey to reevaluate its position in the international politics. According to Davutoğlu (2001), this era actually offers a great deal of opportunities for states that are getting ready to proceed to an upper level in the international politics. Through the immediate end of the Cold War, however, Turkey was not prepared to optimize this opportunity due to a lack of strategic vision. Further, Turkey was concurrently experiencing significant domestic debates regarding political identity, culture, and legitimacy. To avoid similar failures, Davutoğlu (2001) offers a schema for Turkish foreign policy makers; the first step in overcoming such a chaotic situation is spotting particularities of Turkey's political cultural infrastructure.⁴²

Davutoğlu (2001) adds that there are certain characteristics that produce Turkey's political culture not the same as others. Historically, it retains an important space where significant global powers once existed geopolitically. This central position and following engagement with other centers of civilization deeply impacted the sociology of Turkish political culture. The West's beat of and later collapse of the Ottoman Empire created a significant role in the forming of this new political sociology. Despite their rivalry and the Ottoman lack of power, Turkish political elites wished to integrate the newly founded republic in the Western bloc, and especially in Europe. However, the West rejected Turkey's attempts in most instances. According to Davutoğlu (2001), what makes Turkey unique in this situation is partly due to this contradiction between historical significance and simultaneous attempt to integrate itself into another civilization.⁴³

The strategic depth discourse developed by Davutoğlu in the recent years transformed Turkish foreign policy both in theory and practice. The transformation was recognized in foreign policy visions. Foreign policy was purged of the concerns and changes of domestic politics. Foreign policy that served as an instrument of domestic

⁴¹Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Mediation: Critical Reflections from the Field", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XX Issue 1 (2013), pp. 83-90.

⁴² Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁴³ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

politics became a factor that delineated domestic. Using the advancement of the strategic depth discourse, a safer domestic political system became essential to be able to perform more decisive practices in foreign policy. The envisioned restructuring of foreign policy for more effective stand in the international politics required the undertaking of a couple of initiatives to be able to reshape politics on the domestic level. In addition, economic developments, political progress, dynamic social actors, democratic improvement and concord with opposition allowed Turkey to try out a more effective role in international politics. Turkey considered it a basic principle to cooperate with international actors using its deposition historical and civilizational.⁴⁴

A multi-dimensional and implementation of varied strategies in foreign policy strengthened Turkey's position. A well balanced approach to politics among all global and local actors originated. While proceeding with the accession negotiations, it embarked on an activity of unifying neighbor states in assistance and undertook new initiatives towards states situated further geographically. Turkey became a more outspoken and self-confident country in the international politics through its independent international actions. It really is highly possible for Turkey to become global actor in the near future, so long as it achieves a nationwide coherence through the resolution of its current domestic issues, and so long as it creates good use of opportunities and its own strategic plans.⁴⁵

Through the Davutoğlu Doctrine, Turkey's national politics, identity and its own relationship with its neighbors were redefined and reconstituted.⁴⁶ Though it is difficult to evaluate the Davutoğlu Doctrine's strategic depth that shaped Turkey's latest foreign policy in terms of conventional IR theories developed in the West, it could be situated in the conceptual map of IR theories closer to the critical constructivist approach.

The strategic culture that establishes the process of foreign policy making can be an after effect of the structuring and restructuring of state identity at the intersection of the perception of space based on geographic data and the perception of time based on a

⁴⁴Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Strategic Thinking: Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu Explains the Turkish Republic's Place in the World", *Cairo Review*, Vol. 4 (2012), pp. 16-41.

⁴⁵Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Strategic Thinking: Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu Explains the Turkish Republic's Place in the World", *Cairo Review*, Vol. 4 (2012), pp. 16-41.

⁴⁶Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

historical consciousness. According to Davutoğlu (2001), a fragmented sense of identity caused by the lack of strategic vision, a torn country and historical consciousness are along the way of constructing a new historical narrative following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the new elite, rejecting Turkey's historical inheritance, endeavored towards a national identity that designates Turkey as part of the West. However, under the AK Party's leadership is able to convert this historical inheritance into a secured asset in its foreign policy practices. Hence, modify the national identity. Therefore, as the historical inheritance in Kemalist foreign policy functioned as a negative constitutive factor, in the AK Party foreign policy under Davutoğlu Doctrine, it serves as a positive factor. Bearing semblance to the idea New Ottomanism developed by the end of the 80s during Özal's administration as an alternative to the negative conations assigned to Turkey's historical inheritance, Davutoğlu's strategy, since 2003, requires this cultural inheritance as historical, geographical, and social reference in his initiatives.⁴⁷

The transformation of Turkish foreign policy, aligned with the critical constructivist approach, can be explained by the amendment of Turkey's national, social and civilizational identity triggered by the redefined perceptions of the parameters of risk to its national security such as its geographical location, particularly of Istanbul, and own relations with its neighbors, particularly designation of friend and foe, because the reconstruction of political, economic and social structures necessitates a redefinition of relationships as well. Each instance of construction and reconstruction needs the structuring and restructuring of foreign policy.⁴⁸

Therefore, according to Yeşiltaş (2013), which of the transformation factors are more effective can only be revealed by the end of the process of construction and reconstruction required by the developments in the domestic and international environment, the brand new state following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, was constructed based on a new Western identity that originated by following developments in

⁴⁷Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁴⁸Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

the West. The new country was set up based on political nationalism inspired by the French Revolution.⁴⁹

To be able to accommodate the sustainability and endurance of the identity and new political regime, remnants of principles from the old regime were taken off. The transformation recognized through the first years of the Republic is a manifestation of the move. A whole lot of attention was paid so that new nation state was constructed as a modern and Western state based on the principles of nationalism and secularism. According to Yeşiltaş (2014), Turkey's foreign and domestic policies were identified and executed in relative to this new state identity. Within the domestic level, any activity or group opposing the existing regime was excluded from the political stage with accusations of partisanship, factionalism and reactionary politics. That is best illuminated by the actual fact that both most deployed principles in addition to nationalism and laicism, reactionarism (Islamic) and factionalism (Kurdish) remain at the guts of political, economic and social debates.⁵⁰

In tandem with this new identity, in the time immediately subsequent the aftermath of the world war where Turkey suffered huge territorial and material harms, Turkey followed a formal foreign policy that was focus about maintaining the status quo. It built relationships with all new states established with Western assistance, because of the affiliation with the West, especially with those in near vicinity. This move prompted colder, more distanced relationships with countries where Turkey experienced distributed a common historical background and geography. The Middle Eastern region was avoided and otherized because any assistance or coalition with this region evoked images of the past the new nation-states were endeavoring to purge. Manifestations of the Western approach were able to be viewed in Turkey's perceptions of Iran and Israel in terms of their nuclear energy and weapon activities. In the Turkish public sphere, while silence is managed about the nuclear weapons Israel presently possesses, much is said

⁴⁹Murat Yeşiltaş, pp. 661-687.

⁵⁰Murat Yeşiltaş, "Turkey's Quest for a 'New International Order': The Discourse of Civilization and the Politics of Restoration", *Loc. Cit.*

about Iran's acquisition of weapons. The missiles produced by Iran are characterized as worrisome for Turkey.⁵¹

With the Davutoğlu Doctrine, according to Davutoğlu (2001), Turkey entered the process of delineating a new identity more suitable to its new dynamics and the new developments in the international politics. According to the new identity, the conventional nation-state discourses are being deserted in favor of debate on civilization. Thought to be New Ottomanism, the process of constructing a new identity that is more inclusive and more suitable to the process of globalization has started in Turkey. Through the construction of the new identity how national interest and recognized threats were described is transformed, new conception of threats are constructed. Conceptions of interest constructed in the West in Turkey's name are steadily being abandoned.⁵²

Existent threats have been reinterpreted from a Turkey-centric perspective. Through this framework, based on Davutoğlu's strategic vision, initiatives to develop close relationships among states long regarded as threats such as Iran, Syria, Iraq and Armenia are applied. Along the way of constructing the new identity, historical background is conceived as field of opportunity and not as an encumbrance as it was once was conceived. Specifically, the Ottoman legacy that was ignored was reinvigorated and a focus on historical depth started to surface in foreign policy debate. A newfound importance is assigned to Turkey's historical values as well as the values borrowed from the West. Quite simply, in juxtaposition with the Western principles of democracy, primacy of the law, and free market, new principles are being produced consequently of the East-West synthesis and of the remembrance of the multicultural and pluralist past.⁵³

Turkey attempts to possess historical, geographical, strategic, political and civilizational depth on the regional, international and universal level. For Turkey, to become one of the new primary powers in the international politics, it first needs to conquer its national issues. As the construction of a new identity requires the restructuring of both national and international politics, to be able to bring its political initiatives to-

⁵¹Bülent Aras and Aylin Gorener, "National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policy Orientation: The Ideational Bases of the Justice and Development Party's Foreign Policy Activism in the Middle East", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.12 Issue 1 (2010), pp. 73-92.

⁵²Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁵³İlter Turan, "Turkey's Iran Policy: Moving Away from Tradition?", *Analysis on Turkey*, (June 25, 2010), pp. 1-3.

wards the Middle Eastern region to fruition, Turkey first needs to ensure the success of its current democratic initiatives towards Kurdish and Alevi minorities.⁵⁴

Under the Davutoğlu Doctrine, equilibrium between democracy and security in the restructuring of domestic politics was discussed. When foreign policy is conceived as an expansion of domestic politics, it is obvious to see that steps used towards the democratization of the country not only enhances the stability of the country, but also evolves more effective, constructive, and peacefulness promoting foreign policy. State's legitimacy is most beneficial justified by its capability to provide security because of its citizens. However, this security can not be achieved through limitation of freedoms and human rights in the country. Freedom can not be sacrificed in the name of security. Sacrificing freedom in the name of security makes the area for authoritarian regime to penetrate. Under the new identity of Turkey, attempts are created to improve civil liberties without ignoring the nation's security.⁵⁵

This discourse is evinced from the initiatives made towards Kurdish and Alevi minorities and progress manufactured in the process of accession to European Union. Because of the balance achieved between security and democracy, Davutoğlu (2014) emphasizes Turkey's latest foreign policy is more emphasis on soft power than hard power. The practice of securitization of most foreign policy issues within the last decades has been abandoned steadily. Soft power factors assist in execution the soft balancing strategy. Turkey is attaining a reputation as a financing and donor country. Perhaps due to these developments, Istanbul gained preeminence in foreign policy rather than Ankara, which reflects the traditional nationalist state perspective. As the image of two civilizations so that as the bridge between two continents, Istanbul is accepted as a universal center where universal values are easily accommodated. Because of this, in the recent period many bilateral and multilateral international conferences took place in Istanbul rather than in Ankara.⁵⁶

In addition, based on Davutoğlu (2014) Doctrine's executions, for the first time in Turkish history, non-state actors such as civil society organizations began to take part

⁵⁴Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁵⁵Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10 Issue 1, pp. 77-96.

⁵⁶Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

in foreign policy effectively in their functions of providing support and assistance to governmental activities. Civil society organizations, think tanks, companies and charity organizations were turned on to be able to actualize the new foreign policy discourse. As example, TÜSİAD (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, the Turkish Industry and Business Association) and MÜSİAD (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association), which are represent the business world, participate the activities towards speeding the process of accession to the European Union, also facilitates the improvement of relationships with the Middle Eastern region. Furthermore, various civil society and human rights organizations support the new foreign policy with their initiatives in a variety of countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia, and Palestine.⁵⁷

Foreign policy practices, based on Davutoğlu's Doctrine that executed by the AK Party governments since 2003, hold an important philosophical depth, efforts and variety to restructure, incommensurable to the preceding governments. As consequence of this foreign policy, considered as the strategic depth policy, Turkey started to try out increasingly more important roles in regional turmoil and participated in almost all global developments. Due to the rapid extension of its foreign policies, Turkey became a country to be paid attention. Turkey, through Ottoman legacy growing economy and civilizational deposition, can be one of the major players of the international politics, so long as it overcomes international and especially domestic obstructions with regards to its new foreign policy.⁵⁸

Together with involvement of the domestic non-state actors in foreign policy making, Turkey concerned on developing relationships with international non-state actors. Under the Davutoğlu Doctrine, Turkey applied politics actively with various communities, nations, and regions outcome developed constructive communication with these actors. While maintaining the traditional vigorous relationship with the West, Turkey started to consider a dynamic role in the regional politics of the Middle East. It performed an operating role in the international crises including Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan. Psychological obstructions that arose in the Middle East in the 20th

⁵⁷Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

⁵⁸Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

century and became persistent were eliminated. Turkey interacted with political actors situated in the various fronts in the Middle East such as Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, and Hamas. While only states were considered legitimate actors during the prior governments in Turkey, the AK Party authorities developed relationships with Shia, Kurdish and Turkic groups and made improvement in short time. This change in domestic politics actually performed an important role in the construction of a new identity in Turkish foreign policy. It had been a construction that occurred through transformation of domestic politics.⁵⁹

Turkey, under Davutoğlu Doctrine, reconstructed its relationships with the neighboring countries. According to Davutoğlu (2002), first, working under the zero problems with neighbors principles, started mending relationships and offering solutions to existing problems. Then, under the maximum cooperation principles, it aimed to jumpstart an activity of unification by optimizing the potential of cooperation between the countries. Because of these principles Turkey no more recognized itself as a country surround by its enemies. Concrete steps towards resolving the issues with neighboring countries and cofounding establishments that could work to determine common goals. After attaining resolutions to issues with Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey shifted onto resolving its problems with Armenia. After completing the first stage achieving a zero problems level using its neighboring countries, Turkey is executing policies to achieve relationships based on maximum degrees of assistance in recognizing common interests. The prospective is the invigoration of relationships which were originally founded on geographical and historical depth.⁶⁰

There have been also some dimensions that people may consider as intermestic which experienced major transformations through the rule of Davutoğlu Doctrine. Aside from under Özal administration, until 2000s, Turkey implemented an exclusionary foreign policy. Through the rule of the AK Party administration, a far more constructive and more inclusive political and diplomatic discourse originated.⁶¹ As Bozdağlıoğlu (2008) stated, Turkey was characterized as a country surrounded with enemies in every

⁵⁹Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

⁶⁰Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Zero Problems in a New Era*, Retrieved August 18, 2016, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/21/zero-problems-in-a-new-era/>

⁶¹Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

path under the Kemalist leadership, as well as for Turkey's traditional political elite, Türks did not have any friends apart from Türks. Kemalist Turkey, to be able to ensure its presence and security was perpetually seeking equilibrium of power as ascertained by the widespread IR ideas. Having identified its foreign policy and international actions under the influence of these prevalent ideas, Kemalist Turkey implemented an antagonistic foreign policy.⁶² However, according to Yeşiltaş (2013), under the the Davutoğlu Doctrine, an inclusive and constructive discourse was developed. This new vocabulary, discourse, and tone of voice aimed to construct a new way of doing politics.⁶³

Davutoğlu criticized several prominent ideas developed in the end of the Cold War and defended by a huge group of Westerners, such as the new world order, the ultimate end of history and the clash of civilizations. He defended the alternative approaches such as shifting the homogenizing ramifications of globalization towards an experience that promotes distinctions and as enhancing dialogs between civilizations. These assertions Davutoğlu manufactured were calls to Western powers to abandon their hegemonic discourses. Turkey, under Davutoğlu Doctrine, aimed to boost the efficiency of traditional civilizations, especially of Islam as a prerequisite of the civilizational discourse and also to advance an alternative discourse to Western conceptions based on conflict. Among the reasons that produce Davutoğlu policies the prospective of insistent criticism by Westerners is its purported goal of revitalizing the civilization discourse. Turkey aspires to make use of its Ottoman inheritance and the revitalization of the Islamic civilization, in its foreign policy, as a constitutive power factor.⁶⁴

Turkey hosted variety of important international meetings in the recent years. Turkey's cultural, bureaucratic, economic and social actors are functioning with an unprecedented vigor. The level of strength in diplomatic relationships can be easily discerned from the amount of international meetings that took place in Turkey since 2003, multilateral meetings such as the NATO Summit in 2004, African Summit in 2005, and

⁶²Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Modernity, Identity and Turkey's Foreign Policy", *Insight Turkey*, 10(1), pp. 55-76.

⁶³Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), pp. 661-687.

⁶⁴Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

bilateral meetings such as Solana-Larijani in 2007. Turkey also hosted immediate meetings for the actors of regional disputes, such as indirect encounter between Syria and Israel and direct encounters between Afghanistan and Pakistan took place in Istanbul.

Turkey's leaders also deploy active diplomatic strategy. The travel itinerary of Abdullah Gül was only since 2009 testifies to Turkey's active role in the region. The president visited to Riyad to speak at the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia in 2009, to Iran for the EcoSummit, to Iraq to mediate the Talabani-Barzani encounter. The president is an active player in the international politics although presidential office is a comparatively symbolic office in Turkey. Turkey applies a dynamic diplomatic strategy not only to its own international problems with regional or global causes, but also to international crises that does not involve Turkey directly. Turkey took effort in resolving regional issues rather than looking forward to the West to consider the first step. For example, pursuing Israel's attacks on Gaza towards the end of 2008, Erdoğan visited four important Arab countries, while Davutoğlu traveled back and forth between Damascus and Cairo. Erdogan's intervention of the tensions between Iran-Pakistan and Iraq-Syria after terrorist attacks in Iran and Iraq was enough to evince the active role Turkey takes on in regional politics.

This new Turkey's identity, according to Davutoğlu (2001), promotes equidistance in its interactions with others, establishing coalitions to resolve problems and initiating wide based strategic actions. It pays particular focus on not taking sides and staying disinterested in issues, and makes constructive movements towards a win-win strategy to assuage concerns of the international actors. To be able to initiate a peace-building and mitigating role in the answer of regional issues, it insists on taking precautionary measures to be able to raise the trust between Turkey and countries with which it interacts. For instance, Turkey is the only country that maintains constructive relationships with all actors in Iraq. To be able to gain stability in Iraq, Turkey works relentlessly on the international systems to be able to achieve stability, security and unity in the country.⁶⁵

Davutoğlu Doctrine's approach makes national borders obsolete used while still respecting the national sovereignty of the states. Some initiatives used under this ap-

⁶⁵Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

proach aim to make the idea of national borders in the Middle East, especially those attracted by foreign capabilities in southern Turkey irrelevant. Davutoğlu (2001) urges that the idea of nation state is a Western invention rather than universal unit of political evaluation. He put forwards the importance of historical and geographical factors in the development of relations among states and requires these factors into consideration while delineating approaches for Turkey's relationship with states in its proximity.⁶⁶

Instead of prejudiced discourses utilized by the United States such as characterizing its adversaries as the axis of rogue states, Turkey purports to build axis of stability and also to this end, promotes new discourses predicated on the civilizational particularities of the geographical and strategic regions where it is situated. Looking to build relationships among states, not by otherizing but by accommodating, Turkey started to work at building an axis of stability in the regions. According to Davutoğlu Doctrine, any development in the region could cause a domino impact. Since regional political and financial issues are closely related to each other, development in virtually any one of these may have a negative or positive influence on the region. Therefore, to be able to attain stability in the region, the domino tiles must be constructed well ensuring the fall of the first tile towards the right direction.⁶⁷

In Turkey's new inclusive foreign policy predicated on civilizational foundations, an optimistic sum game predicated on the win-win strategy is recommended to the zero sum game in its relationships with its neighbors. To this end, new strategic approaches to its issues with Cyprus, Kurds, Iraq, Iran and Armenia are constructed. Because of this transformation in Turkish foreign policy, a positive change in perceptions of Turkey in its region has been noticed. Turkey's new strategy of emphasizing assistance and coalition improved its regional image.⁶⁸

According to Davutoğlu (2014), Turkey's relatively steady and intensifying democracy, its powerful political institutions, developed economy, historical accumulation, strategic depth, civilizational discourse and cultural development combines to impress the states and society of the region. Under the Davutoğlu Doctrine which was constructed by the AK Party and aligned with the conceptual construction summarized

⁶⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁶⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

⁶⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", *SAM (Centre for Strategic Research)* Vol. 3 (2012) pp. 1–14.

above, Turkey started to check out a multi-dimensional, multi sided, and multitracked foreign policy. The new foreign policy constructed in different dimensions.⁶⁹

The mainstream theoretical approaches, such as liberalism and realism, are fails to clarify the change in foreign policy in Turkey. The transformation can be described best through the use of the theoretical tools of critical constructivism. What occurred in Turkey was an elaborate process which includes the change of state and foreign policy identity from within, through a significant change in domestic politics and discourse on foreign policy through the activities of different actors and from outside, through a transformation of Turkey's relationships using its neighbor actors.

The result of the transformation was a Turkish foreign policy with a new identity. Three dimensions of the new identity especially differed from the premises of the traditional foreign policy. Firstly, contrary to the realist discourse it began to interact with informal actors. Secondly, it started to develop close relationships with groups of states that engage in various ideologies and regimes. And lastly, non-state actors are representing different parts of the country, for the first time involved in the process of foreign policy making.

Conclusion

This article concluded that the Davutoğlu Doctrine's vision is not only an endeavor to overturn the traditional tendencies in Turkish foreign policy, but also in any ways, is a task of identity transformation. This new activism has led to a shift in the axis of its foreign policy from the Western orientation to a more assertive, strict independent foreign policy that is central to the Davutoğlu's foreign policy doctrine. However, this does not cause a new company's axis, while trying to engage in independent foreign policy in the Middle East, Turkey continues to rely on the West and still continues to pursue European Union full membership.

Such activism was turned on through the construction of an identity articulated based on a reinterpretation of Turkey's historical background and geographic location.

⁶⁹Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, (Istanbul: Küre, 2014).

Regarding this, although some argued that Davutoğlu's vision of a new and focus on critical civilization as a new political device represented an anti-hegemonic try to de-qualify the West as the epitome of civilization and the guts of world politics, his foreign policy vision in reality contains components of another hegemonic premise to the extends that it generates power hierarchies within this civilization.

Davutoğlu assert along the relative lines of this new vision, Davutoğlu embarked on the proactive foreign policy on multiple fronts including the Middle East, to transform Turkey into a key regional power. In addition, Davutoğlu has been quite constant in his articulation of Turkey's identity and the duties that this entail consistent with Turkey's ascribed role as a central and sensible country. Meanwhile, it needs to be noted that the construction of a particular identity and a new vision foreign policy, particularly predicated on closer relationships with neighbors and including such duties as an international mediator, ultimately depends on the acknowledgement of Turkey as a credible and influential actor by the other actors.

As the strong identity that Davutoğlu constructed for Turkey is appears as an optimistic development and a way to obtain satisfaction for his country in the domestic entrance at least for a certain percentage of the Turkish population as there is a significant opposition to the foreign policy of the AK Party administration, its success in foreign policy depends upon not only tangible outputs but also others' perceptions of Turkey, it is identity and aims in the relationships.

This is specially the case when one requires under consideration the rigid hierarchies created and reproduced in the foreign policy discourse of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan between Turkey and other associates of the so-called Islamic civilization. As interesting this new vision is, if Turkey's others do not agree with the aims and process of Turkey's new foreign policy, and also identify using its neo-Ottoman tone at times, then it is doomed to fail. It is eventually the external perception and acceptance of Turkey among not only the other members of the civilization, but also other major actors in the international politics, that could determine the success of Turkey's new foreign policy vision and identity.

This positive external conception and approval has proven difficult as yet, especially in light of the recent advancements in Syria, Iraq, and the region. Therefore, it could be concluded that this new identity and foreign policy became a step much for the

AK Party administration and Davutoğlu as their ultimate architect, which the recourses and references to the imperial historical background and geography of Turkey did not have the required effect on Turkey's current foreign policy, this is what makes this issue unique and worthy of further study.

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